WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

New Bus and Rail services between India and Pakistan

*41. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Pakistan are planning to start any new bus and rail services between the two countries;

(b) if so, the details of the proposed services; and

(c) by when these are expected to start?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) During the recent visit of the External Affairs Minister to Pakistan from February 15-17, 2005, agreements were reached with Pakistan to start bus services between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad, and between Amritsar and Lahore, including to religious places such as Nankana Sahib. Pakistan also agreed to work towards early restoration of Khokrapar-Munnabao rail link. The Srinagar Muzaffarabad bus service is expected to commence on 7 April 2005. Dates for the Amritsar-Lahore bus service and the Khokrapar-Munnabao rail link would be finalized in consultation with the Government of Pakistan.

FDI in Telecom sector

*42. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) upto 74 per cent in the telecom sector has been considered:

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of foreign investors who have come forward to invest in the telecom sector;

(d) the concrete measures proposed by Government to improve the telecommunication system in the country; and

(e) by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?